



Community Relations Plan

**Monsanto Chemical Corporation
Caribou County, Idaho**

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 10**

December 17, 1991

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Community Relations Plan

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**Monsanto Chemical Corporation
Caribou County, Idaho**

Purpose

At all Superfund sites, community involvement and good communications between EPA and the community are essential in determining courses of action and to ensure the success of the project. This document is an interim plan to help guide EPA's community relations activities at the Monsanto Superfund site. This plan will be updated as additional information about community concerns and needs become available.

If you have information or concerns regarding the site or how to best involve and inform the community, please contact Dan Phalen, EPA Community Relations Coordinator at 1-800-424-4EPA.

Site Description and History:

The Monsanto site is located in a broad rural valley in Caribou County, Idaho, approximately two miles north of the town of Soda Springs. Access to the site is via State Highway 34.

The facility primarily manufactures elemental phosphorus. Phosphorus from the Monsanto Plant is used for a wide variety of common applications in detergents, soft drinks, leavening agents in baked goods, toothpaste, and water treatment. Other applications include use in the metal plating and automobile industries, fire retardants, and herbicides ("Round-up"). Approximately 400 workers are currently employed at the plant.

Concerns about possible health and environmental impacts due to contamination from the plant have dated back to the early 1980's. The Caribou County Health Department and the Idaho Hazardous Materials Bureau inspected the site in the early 1980's.

In 1987, EPA placed Monsanto on a list of potential Superfund sites based primarily on concerns about metals in groundwater. EPA hired Ecology and Environment, Inc. to begin a formal "Site Inspection Report" which was completed in April of 1988. Based upon the Site Report and the subsequent National Priorities List ranking system, the Monsanto site was added to the National Priorities List (NPL), commonly known as Superfund, in August of 1990.

The health and environmental risk of principal concern is the potential pollution of groundwater aquifers which provide water for drinking and irrigation. The upper layer of groundwater has been shown to have high levels of vanadium and heavy

metals such as lead and arsenic. The source of this pollution is from the highly contaminated settling ponds on the site.

Ground water within three miles of the site is used extensively for residential, commercial and agricultural applications. There are 22 registered domestic drinking wells within three miles of the site, four production wells, seven registered irrigation wells and the two water sources for the City of Soda Springs Water Department. The population of Soda Springs is currently 3,111. Approximately 84 people are supplied drinking water from private wells in the area.

Once the site was included on the NPL, the next step in the Superfund process is to conduct a detailed investigation of the site to determine the nature and extent of the contamination. This is called a Remedial Investigation (RI). Based on the findings of this investigation, EPA will evaluate a range of possible cleanup alternatives. This is called a Feasibility Study (FS). Once the Feasibility Study has been concluded, EPA will recommend the desired plan for the cleanup. The company, state and local officials, and concerned citizens will have ample opportunity to comment on the proposed cleanup plan before it becomes final. EPA will involve and inform the community throughout the Superfund process.

Community Profile

The City of Soda Springs is the community most likely to be effected by the site. It is located in southeast Idaho and is the county seat for Caribou County. According to the 1980 census, the population of Soda Springs was 4,051. The 1990 census showed that the population had dropped to 3,111.

The surrounding area is largely rural. Agricultural and rangeland accounts for over 93% of the county while urban or built-up land accounts for only about .4% of the county. The major industries are located just north of Soda Springs, on the outskirts of town. Monsanto Chemical Corporation is located directly across from the Kerr-McGee Corporation on State Highway 34. Nu West Industries is located four miles further north. Each of these facilities is involved in the processing of phosphate ores or byproducts.

In the early days, Soda Springs became important as a junction for the Union Pacific Railroad. Prior to the mining of phosphates in the early 1950's, the economy was primarily agricultural. Agriculture now represents a small percentage of the Soda Springs economy. Phosphate related industry is a vital part of the local economy. Over 500 jobs are directly related to the phosphate industry.

Soda Springs is surrounded by agricultural land and rolling mountains. A geyser in the center of town is a local tourist attraction.

Key Community Concerns:

Thus far, EPA's contact with the Soda Springs community has mainly focused on the Southeast Idaho Radionuclide Study and the issue of radiation associated with phosphate slag. EPA representatives have had numerous conversations with industry, public officials and the public, as well as over 150 questionnaire responses from Soda Springs and Pocatello residents. Formal community interviews were conducted in Soda Springs in early August, 1990. Although these contacts have mainly related to the slag issue, some comments were made regarding the Superfund listings. The community concerns expressed in this plan will be supplemented by additional community interviews to be conducted in 1992.

Primary community concerns fall into several categories:

Health Concerns: In general, residents did not express alarm over the potential for groundwater contamination. However, adjacent residents and some farmers were concerned about water quality. Water is a scarce commodity and water rights are of high concern.

Economic Stability and Job Loss: Because Soda Springs is dependent on the phosphate industry, the possible loss of jobs is a concern for many citizens. Kerr McGee employs about 60 people, while Monsanto employs over 400 workers. In addition, "the ripple effect" of any job loss could be felt by the entire community.

Property Values: Some residents feel that property values in the area could drop due to adverse publicity associated with Superfund.

Agency Credibility: Many local citizens do not trust EPA. The uncertainties associated with risk assessments and the fact that the scientific community seems to be divided on the slag issue has contributed to this mistrust. The loss of agency credibility due to the controversy over the Idaho Radionuclide Study has affected agency credibility across the board. Although the Superfund listings are unrelated to the "slag issue", concern has been expressed about the relationship between the sites and the slag issue.

Community Image: Many people are concerned about the general reputation of their community. They are concerned that it could be labeled an unsafe place to live.

Slag: Currently, the slag issue and the Idaho Radionuclide Study represent the most serious concerns of the community regarding EPA and the environment. The Science Advisory Board (SAB) review of the study is an important step in re-establishing agency credibility and openness to scientific review. This issue is addressed in detail in the "Community Involvement Plan for the Idaho Radionuclide Study/Phosphate Slag Issue", available at the Soda Springs Library.

Objectives of the Community Relations Plan

Objective 1: Give citizens the opportunity to comment on and be involved in decisions. Encourage and assist local citizens in contributing to agency decisions that will have long-term effects on their community.

- Emphasize two-way communication between the community and EPA.
- Provide opportunities for formal and informal comment on documents and plans, including meetings with citizens and groups when requested.
- Hold public meeting(s) and/or informal briefings to discuss study results and cleanup alternatives.
- Place all relevant documents in the information repository at the Soda Springs Public Library.
- Provide information on Technical Assistance Grants (TAG grants) to all interested parties. TAG grants are available from EPA to enable citizens groups to hire their own technical experts to interpret site related documents and other matters that contribute to the public understanding of site activities.

Objective 2: Inform the public of planned and ongoing activities.

- Publish fact sheets periodically to update activities on the site. These fact sheets will be mailed to individuals on EPA's mailing list.
- EPA will maintain an up-to-date mailing list including public officials, media representatives, local residents and businesses. Anyone wishing to have their name added to the mailing list should contact:

**Dan Phalen
EPA Community Relations Coordinator
1200 6th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101
1-800-424-4EPA**

- EPA will keep the state, the local Health Department, the City of Soda Springs, and the Soda Springs Police and Fire Departments apprised of site activities on a regular basis. During field activities, officials will be briefed as appropriate.
- Public meetings will be announced by paid advertisements in the Caribou County Sun, as well as through fact sheets and news releases.

Objective 3: Identify and help resolve conflicts that may arise.

- EPA recognizes that conflict has the potential for constructive action and that unaddressed conflict can have a negative effect on the community, the agency and the project. Open and frank communication is essential for resolving potential conflicts.
- Should conflict arise, EPA will work with the affected groups to identify the issues and discuss them in a manner that will serve a useful purpose for the community and the agency.

Appendix I

EPA Contacts:

Tim Brincefield
EPA Project Manager
1200 6th Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101
(206) 553-2100 direct or
1-800-424-4EPA

Mark Masarik
EPA Operations Office
422 W. Washington, Street
Boise, Idaho 83702
208-334-9506

Dan Phalen
EPA Community Relations Coordinator
1200 6th Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101
(206) 553-6709 direct or
1-800-424-4EPA

Appendix II

Information Repository:

Soda Springs Public Library
149 South Main
Soda Springs, ID 83276
(208) 547-2606

Appendix III

Key Community Contacts:

(NOTE: ALL TELEPHONE AREA CODES ARE 208 UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

MAYOR

Kirk L. Hansen	City of Soda Springs 9 West 2nd South Soda Springs, ID 83276	547-2600
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COUNTY COMMISSION, CHAIR

Aeriel Larson	Caribou County 159 S. Main Soda Springs, ID 83276	547-3039
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CITIZEN'S GROUPS

Dr. Stanley Dorius	Chair Citizen's Advisory Board 311 West 4th Street Soda Springs, ID 83276	547-2121/3085
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SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPT.

Jack Palmer	Director 465 Memorial Drive Pocatello, ID 83201	233-9080
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Environmental Health Supervisor
465 Memorial Drive
Pocatello, ID 83201

Tom Hepworth	Caribou Health Dept. 184 South Main Soda Springs, ID 83276	547-4375
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STATE OF IDAHO

Richard Schultz	Administrator Division of Health Idaho Dept. of Health & Welfare Statehouse Mail Boise, ID 83720	334-5945
Joe Nagel	Administrator Division of Environmental Quality Idaho Dept. of Health & Welfare Statehouse Mail Boise, ID 83720	
Marc Johnson	Office of the Governor Statehouse Mail Boise, ID 83720	
Gordon Brown	Project Manager IDHW, DEQ 224 S. Arthur Pocatello, ID 83204-3202	236-6160

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Senator Larry Craig	Boise Office 304 North 8th Street, Room 147 Boise, ID 83702	342-7985
	Pocatello Office Federal Building, Room 216 Pocatello, ID 83201	236-6817
Senator Steve Symms	Boise Office 8th & Bannock Boise, ID 83702	334-1776
	Pocatello Office 207 Federal Building Pocatello, ID 83201	236-6775

Congressman Richard Stallings

Boise Office
8th & Bannock
Boise, ID 83702

334-1953

Pocatello Office
250 S. 4th, Room 220
Pocatello, ID 83201

236-6734

Appendix IV

MEDIA CONTACTS

(NOTE: ALL TELEPHONE AREA CODES ARE 208 UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

Note: The media represented in this appendix goes beyond the area of immediate concern. In general, media will be contacted based on the geographical area involved and the nature of the meeting announcement, fact sheet, press release, etc. This is in keeping with community concerns that local issues be kept in perspective.

Idaho State Journal P.O. Box 431 Pocatello, ID 83201	232-4161
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Grace Citizen 101 E. North Grace, ID 83241	425-3693
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Caribou County Sun P.O. Box 815 Soda Springs, ID 83276	547-3260
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